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ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS™

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ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS

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ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS #5. July 2025. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293.

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...EVER BEEN STUCK IN A LOOP?

HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS?!

HEY, LET ME ASK YOU...

TRY THAT AGAIN, YOU SONUVABITCH! I DARE YOU!

YOU THINK I ENJOY IT?!

A DESTRUCTIVE CYCLE YOU COULDN'T GET OUT OF?

DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME!

WHIRLING CYCLES OF VIOLENCE THAT SEEM TO GO ON FOREVER?

ENDLESS REPETITIONS OF THE SAME BAD CHOICES AND BAD OUTCOMES?

EVER FEEL YOU WERE GOING IN CIRCLES?

I CAN'T KEEP HAVING THIS CONVERSATION! I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!

SLAP

...HAVE I SAID THIS ALREADY? MY NAME'S ANNA.

ANNA?! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I HAVE? OKAY. Sorry. WHERE WAS I?

WHAT'S WRONG?

OH YEAH. STUCK IN THE LOOP.

OR, ACTUALLY, JUST SPIT OUT OF IT. BUT I COULDN'T SAY THAT THEN.

ETHAN, CALL 911!

I COULDN'T SPEAK, OR MOVE, OR MAKE SENSE OF ANYTHING GOING ON AROUND ME.

ALL I COULD DO WAS STARE UP AT THE CEILING FAN...

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO ANNA!

...TRYING TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND IT.

IT TOOK ME WEEKS TO **RELEARN** HOW TO **WALK**, MONTHS TO RELEARN HOW TO TALK. HOW TO BE **AWAKE** AND HAVE **OPINIONS** AND **MAKE DECISIONS** ABOUT THINGS.

ANNA, SWEETIE, WHAT'S GOING ON? TELL US WHAT ***HAPPENED.***

MAKING THE WORDS WAS PHYSICALLY DIFFICULT. IT STILL IS.

I'D PRACTICED THEM ALONE IN MY ROOM, **OVER** AND **OVER** AGAIN.

IT WAS THE ***SAME MINUTE...*** ON REPEAT. 62nd... ***SIXTY*** SECONDS... LIKE A ***LOOP.*** I COULDN'T CHAINS ANYTHINGS... ***change anything.*** COULDN'T... COULDN'T DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT.

TR-tr-TRAPPED.... IN MY OWN BODY. COULD ONLY ***W-W-WATCH...*** EVERYTHING HAPPEN, AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...

SIXTY SECONDS. NOT FIFTY-NINE. NOT SIXTY-ONE. ***SIXTY.*** I ***COUNTED.***

I counted so many times...

Oh, ANNA...

SLAP

ANNA, HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU EXPERIENCE THIS... THIS *LOOP?*

A MILLION, MILLION YEARS' WORTH, *I WANTED TO SAY. BIGGER THAN NUMBERS.*

*BACK THEN, CARS AND WASHING MACHINES AND **PEOPLE** BROKE DOWN, NOT **TIME**.*

I...

*BUT I WAS AFRAID THEY WOULDN'T **BELIEVE** ME.*

THIS WAS BEFORE MOST PEOPLE HAD HEARD ABOUT THE CRISIS.

...I DON'T KNOW.

THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME ANYWAY. THEIR LOGIC SWAM IN NEAT LITTLE CIRCLES.

"IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE THINGS LIKE THAT DON'T HAPPEN."

SLAM

THEY TOOK ME TO NEUROLOGISTS, PSYCHIATRISTS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, THERAPISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, PARA-SOCIAL WORKERS, PRIESTS, PREACHERS--

--ANYONE WHO CLAIMED THEY COULD HELP.

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?

EVERY TIME THEY MADE ME TELL MY STORY, IT WAS LIKE I WAS BACK THERE AGAIN...

YOU THINK I ENJOY IT?!

...VICTIM OF MY OWN MOVEMENTS, SLAVE TO MY PAST DECISIONS.

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?

TRY THAT AGAIN, YOU SONUVABITCH! I DARE YOU!

SOMETIMES HE WAS THERE, AND SOME-TIMES NOT.

STUCK IN THE LOOP.

DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME!

I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE BROKEN-LOOKING MAN IN A JETPACK.

SURE, I CAN PRESCRIBE SOMETHING FOR THAT.

I DID NOT TELL THEM ABOUT THE ARGUMENT. I DID NOT TELL THEM ABOUT THE SLAP.

I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE SOFT FEEL OF THE CARPET BETWEEN MY TOES-- THE SOAPY SMELL OF FRESH LAUNDRY-- THE CONTINUOUS PRAYERS OF THE CEILING FAN.

KOCH LIFE COACHING

SLAP

THEY ALL HAD A DIFFERENT THEORY.

IT IS WHAT IT IS.

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD. A *DELUSION* BROUGHT ON BY *STRESS IN THE HOME.*

AN ATYPICAL FIRING OF NEURONS, PROBABLY SOMETHING GENETIC.

AN AUGUSTINIAN MOMENT OF *ENLIGHTENMENT!*

A SELF-DESCRIBED GURU WITH QUESTIONABLE CREDENTIALS SAID IT ALL BY SAYING NOTHING--

BUT THIS REALLY *HAPPENED.* IT WASN'T JUST... JUST A METAPHOR OR HALLUCINATION...

A NEW KIND OF "*TRAUMA LOOP*"-- MENTAL TIME TRAVEL--

--STRAIGHT AHEAD.

TIME DOESN'T LOOP. TIME ONLY MOVES IN *ONE* DIRECTION--

I'M SURE IT *SEEMS* THAT WAY, ANNA, BUT...

THE MORE I INSISTED SOMETHING REAL HAD HAPPENED TO ME, THE MORE **UPSET** EVERYONE GOT.

WHY ARE YOU ***DOING*** THIS?! I JUST WANT THINGS TO GO BACK TO HOW THEY WERE ***BEFORE!***

SO I STOPPED INSISTING.

I WAS THIRTEEN, AND THIRTY MILLION, YEARS OLD.

THEY PUT ME ON PILLS THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO "HELP ME MOVE FORWARD."

OF COURSE THEY DIDN'T WORK-- JUST LEFT ME FEELING SCRAPED OUT AND BEHIND THE CURVE--

--BUT TAKING THEM MADE MY **PARENTS** FEEL BETTER.

FOR THEM, TIME RESUMED ITS NORMAL FLOW AND THE UNIVERSE MOVED INCREMENTALLY ON.

FOR ME, IT WAS HARDER.

EVERYTHING WAS HARDER.

AHH!

UUF!

AFTER ALL THAT, I WAS BASICALLY BACK TO SQUARE ONE.

ONLY 60 SECONDS HAD PASSED FOR EVERYONE ELSE, BUT FOR ME IT'D BEEN AN ETERNITY.

BIG THINGS AND LITTLE THINGS.

LIKE, I USED TO LOVE RUNNING. I WAS ON THE JUNIOR CROSS COUNTRY TEAM. BUT AFTER THE... AFTER WHAT HAPPENED, I COULDN'T EVEN TIE MY SHOES.

"Make two large loops"--

I'D LOST THE KNACK AND COULDN'T GET IT BACK.

MY PARENTS TRIED TO BE SUPPORTIVE.

VELCRO. SO YOU CAN GO RUNNING AGAIN!

I GUESS THEY FELT GUILTY.

LIKE IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THEIR FAULT, WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. THEIR FIGHTING, AND ALL.

THEIR OWN LITTLE LOOP.

Oh. THANKS.

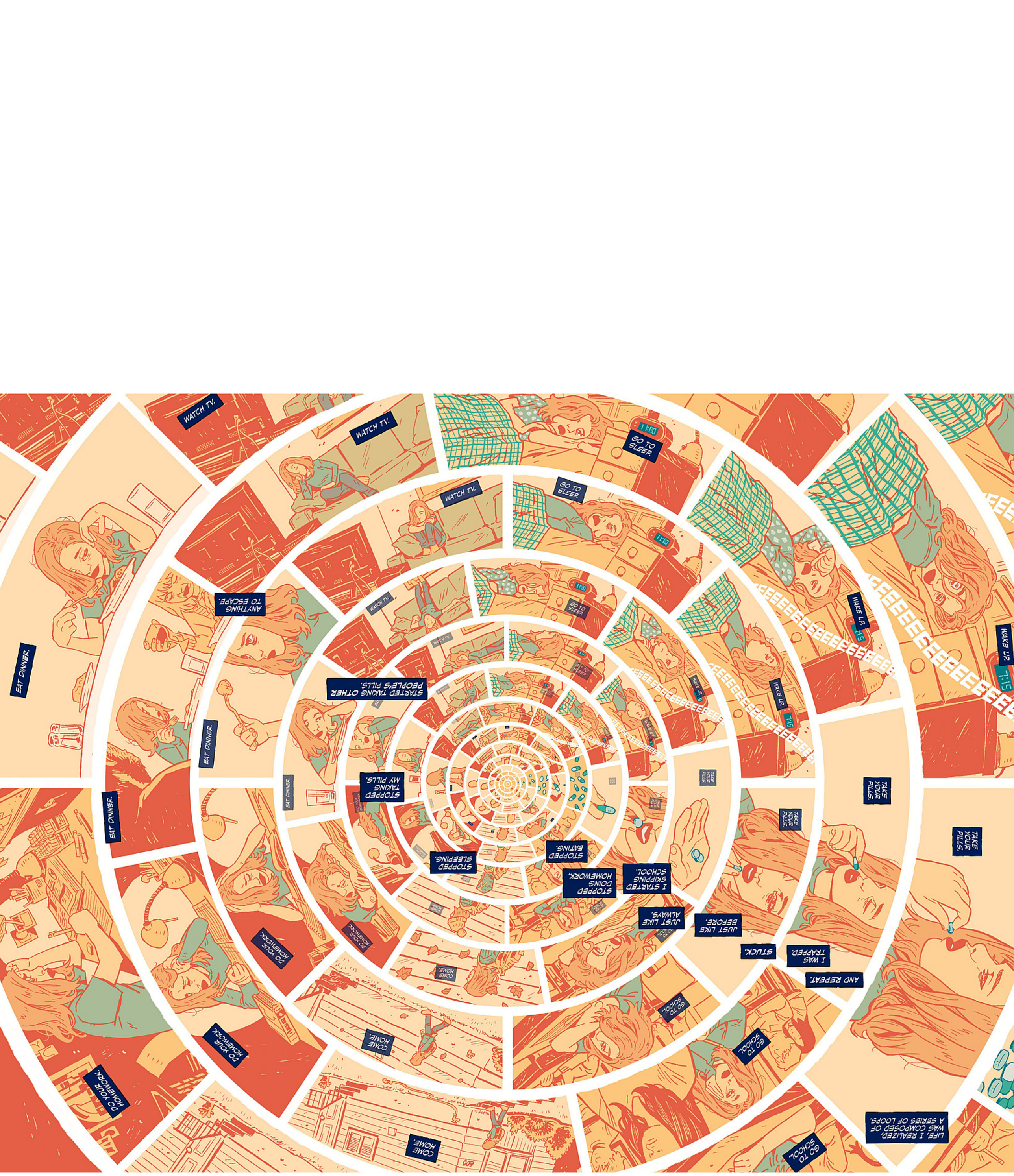
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE IT WAS.

HEY. SUN GOES UP, SUN COMES DOWN, RIGHT? THE WORLD KEEPS *SPINNING.* EVERY DAY IS A CHANCE TO GET *BETTER.*

--THEY STARTED SLIPPING INTO THE SAME OLD PATTERNS.

ANYWAY, AFTER A WHILE--

I'LL


WATCH TV.
WATCH TV.
WATCH TV.
GO TO SLEEP.
GO TO SLEEP.
WAKE UP.
WAKE UP.
WAKE UP.
EAT DINNER.
ANYTHING TO ESCAPE.
STARTED TAKING OTHER PEOPLE'S PILLS.
STOPPED TAKING MY PILLS.
TAKE YOUR PILLS.
TAKE YOUR PILLS.
TAKE YOUR PILLS.
EAT DINNER.
EAT DINNER.
DO YOUR HOMEWORK.
DO YOUR HOMEWORK.
DO YOUR HOMEWORK.
STOPPED SLEEPING.
STOPPED EATING.
STOPPED DOING HOMEWORK.
I STARTED SKIPPING SCHOOL.
JUST LIKE ALWAYS.
JUST LIKE BEFORE.
STUCK.
I WAS TRAPPED.
AND REPEAT.
COME HOME.
COME HOME.
COME HOME.
GO TO SCHOOL.
GO TO SCHOOL.
GO TO SCHOOL.
LIFE, I REALIZED, WAS COMPOSED OF A SERIES OF LOOPS.

AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING WAS HIM-- THE BROKEN-LOOKING MAN IN THE JETPACK.

ONCE I STARTED LOOKING, I FOUND HIM EVERYWHERE--

ON GRAINY BLACK-AND-WHITE SECURITY FOOTAGE, PASSINGLY MENTIONED IN VICTIM ACCOUNTS, HIDDEN IN THE BACKGROUND OF 17th CENTURY ENGRAVINGS...

I EVEN FOUND WHAT COULD BE A PRIMITIVE REPRESENTATION OF HIS SYMBOL CARVED ON PREHISTORIC CAVE WALLS.

THE CRISIS FOLLOWED HIM LIKE A BAD SMELL. IF I COULD TALK TO HIM, I COULD FINALLY GET SOME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS LIKE...

...WHY ME?

AND HOW DO I GET PAST IT?

JAMES DIRKBARRY

IT BECAME A-- what do you call it?-- A REPETITIVE THOUGHT.

I BECAME TERRIFIED THAT IN THREE MONTHS OR THIRTY YEARS I'D BE EATING A SANDWICH, OR ON MY WAY TO WORK, OR HOLDING MY GRANDCHILD...

--BECAUSE I REMEMBER THE PAIN OF REALIZING THEY WEREN'T.

...AND, BOOM, I'D WAKE UP, STILL STUCK IN THE LOOP.

ENDLESSLY THIRTEEN, ENDLESSLY HELPLESS, ENDLESSLY TRAPPED.

I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MOST OF THEM, BUT I GUESS THEY MUST HAVE FELT PRETTY REAL--

RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED.

I'D LIVED WHOLE LIVES IN THERE. IN MY HEAD. IN THE LOOP.

IT HAD... HAPPENED BEFORE. AFTER A FEW MILLION YEARS, THE MIND DOES FUNNY THINGS.

I INTERVIEWED EVERY CRISIS VICTIM I COULD FIND...
HI, MY NAME'S ANNA...
...I THOUGHT I WAS GETTING CLOSE... CIRCLING SOMETHING...
...SOME KIND OF TRUTH OR INSIGHT...
WE JUST WANT TO PUT IT BEHIND US.
WELL... ME TOO.
I'D HEARD THE PHRASE "DOWNWARD SPIRAL" BEFORE, BUT NOW I REALLY UNDERSTOOD IT--
--FELT ITS MANIC, DOWNWARD-CLOCKWISE PULL...
--WHAT IF IT WAS ALL IN MY HEAD?
PLEASE, JUST LEAVE US ALONE!
SLAM!
...HOPING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE TEMPORAL EVENT YOU...
THERE WAS THIS THOUGHT THAT KEPT GOING AROUND AND AROUND, I COULDN'T STOP IT...
...BUT IT WAS MORE LIKE I WAS BEING DRAGGED INTO THE UNIVERSE'S NERVOUS BREAKDOWN...
I WAS SPINNING OUT.
WHAT IF EVERYTHING-- THE REHAB, THE ARGUMENTS, THE WORK, THE PAIN--
SLAM!
THE THOUGHT WAS-- WHAT IF I'D NEVER LEFT THE LOOP?
SLAM!
--SEEN THIS MAN?

I TRIED PROVING I WAS FREE. FREE TO DO WHATEVER I WANTED.

BUT IT WAS NO USE. ALL I COULD DO WAS TRY TO ESCAPE.

TO MAKE THE THOUGHTS STOP. EVEN FOR A SECOND.

MY PARENTS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH ME.

NEITHER DID I.

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW SIXTY SECONDS COULD CHANGE SO MUCH.

ANYONE BUT ME, I MEAN.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MY *DAUGHTER?* A LITTLE TEENAGE REBELLION WE EXPECTED, BUT *THIS?* REBELLING AGAINST A *FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT* OF THE *UNIVERSE?!*

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOU! YOUR TEACHERS SAY YOU'VE MISSED TOO MUCH SCHOOL!

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO *REPEAT THE YEAR!*

I CAN EMPATHIZE, NOW.

THEY'D HEARD ABOUT THE CRISIS ON THE NEWS, BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ACTUALLY AFFECTED.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR EVERYONE IF I WENT AS FAR AWAY AS I COULD. SO I WENT SOMEWHERE FAR, AWAY.

NEW YORK. LOOKED NICE. THE THING LOOKED OK FROM OUT ON A GRID.

SO I LEFT.

OR I TRIED TO.

...I ALWAYS ENDED UP RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED.

I TRIED BUSES AND BOATS.

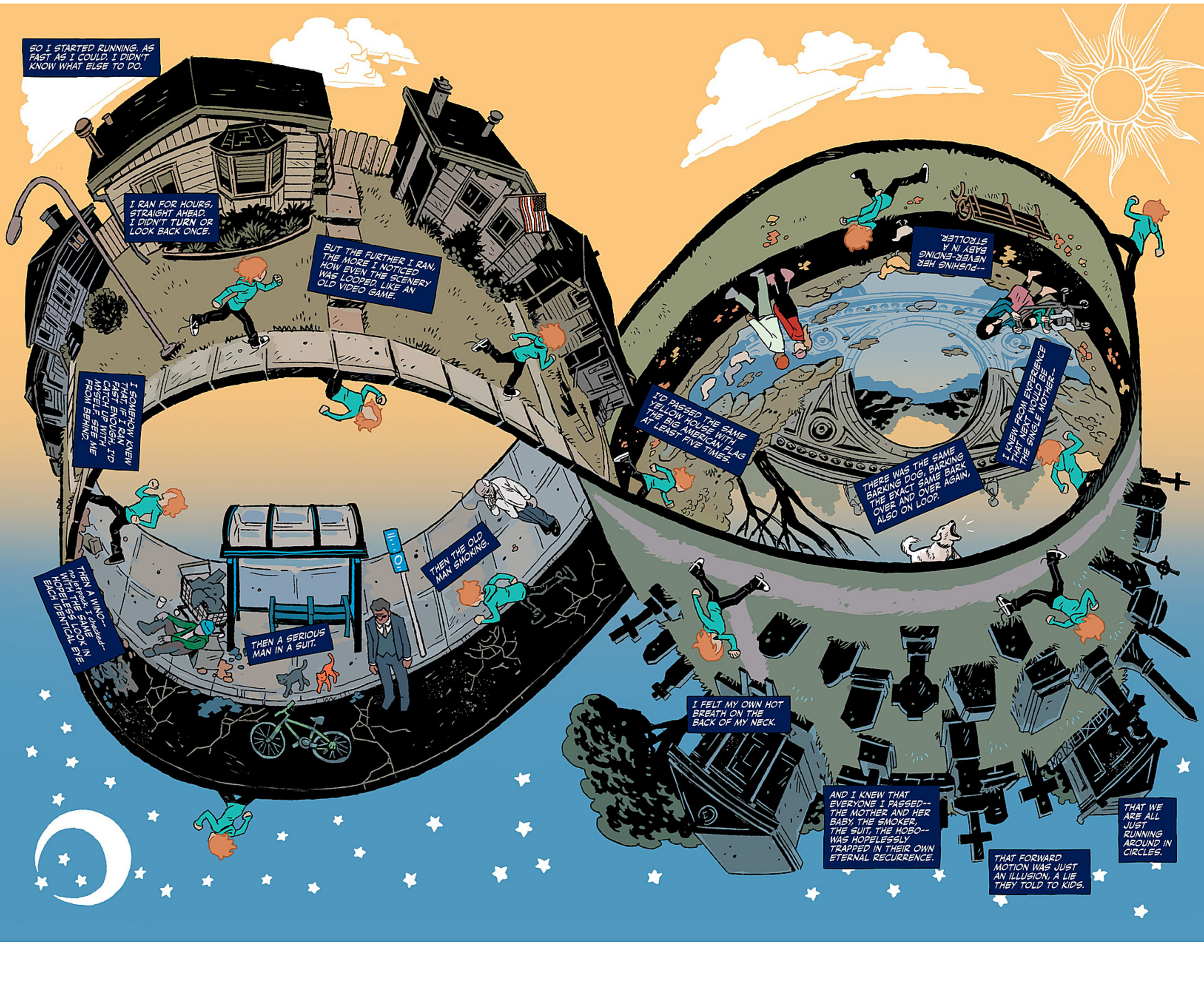
BUT NO MATTER WHAT...

I TRIED PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES.

END OF LINE

TAXIS

Airport
NEXT 2 EXIT


SO I STARTED RUNNING. AS FAST AS I COULD. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.
I RAN FOR HOURS, STRAIGHT AHEAD. I DIDN'T TURN OR LOOK BACK ONCE.
BUT THE FURTHER I RAN, THE MORE I NOTICED HOW EVEN THE SCENERY WAS LOOPED. LIKE AN OLD VIDEO GAME.
I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT IF I RAN FAST ENOUGH, I'D CATCH UP WITH MYSELF. SEE ME FROM BEHIND.
THEN A WINO-- no jetpack. I checked-- WITH THE SAME HOPELESS LOOK IN EACH IDENTICAL EYE.
THEN A SERIOUS MAN IN A SUIT.
THEN THE OLD MAN SMOKING.
I'D PASSED THE SAME YELLOW HOUSE, WITH THE BIG AMERICAN FLAG AT LEAST FIVE TIMES.
--PUSHING HER NEVER-ENDING BABY IN A STROLLER.
I KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT NEXT WOULD BE THE SINGLE MOTHER--
THERE WAS THE SAME BARKING DOG, BARKING THE EXACT SAME BARK OVER AND OVER AGAIN, ALSO ON LOOP.
I FELT MY OWN HOT BREATH ON THE BACK OF MY NECK.
AND I KNEW THAT EVERYONE I PASSED-- THE MOTHER AND HER BABY, THE SMOKER, THE SUIT, THE HOBO-- WAS HOPELESSLY TRAPPED IN THEIR OWN ETERNAL RECURRENCE.
THAT FORWARD MOTION WAS JUST AN ILLUSION, A LIE THEY TOLD TO KIDS.
THAT WE ARE ALL JUST RUNNING AROUND IN CIRCLES.

SUDDENLY I COULD SEE MY WHOLE FUTURE, LAID OUT AROUND ME.

I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE!

THAT'S IT! I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

YOU ARE INSANE, ANNA!

DISFUNCT

I'D NEVER ESCAPE IT.

DON'T BE A BITCH, ANNA!

LISTENING TO THAT SAME ARGUMENT FOREVER.

I'D ALWAYS BE THERE. STUCK IN THAT DULL LITTLE ETERNITY.

GO AHEAD, I DARE YOU!

SLAM

THE FUTURE IS THE PAST. TIME IS A CLOSED CIRCLE.

THE UNIVERSE IS A SNAKE EATING ITS OWN TAIL.

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF IT.

STRAIGHT AHEAD.

I MUST HAVE KILLED MYSELF A TRILLION TIMES IN MY DREAMS, BUT THIS TIME FELT DIFFERENT.

EVERYTHING WAS SUDDENLY VIVID AND NEW.

THE SMOOTH NYLON ROPE AROUND MY NECK.

THE WHOOSH WHOOSH OF THE WASHING MACHINE.

THE WOBBLING COFFEE TABLE BENEATH MY--

AS THE ROPE TIGHTENED AROUND MY NECK, AND MY BRAIN STARTED DYING FROM LACK OF OXYGEN, THE ROOM ROTATED AROUND ME, AND I THOUGHT--

HRRK!

--FREE.
FINALLY,
FREE.

AND I LOOKED DOWN AT THAT ROOM ONE LAST TIME, MAYBE TO SAY GOODBYE, OR JUST TO WATCH IT DISAPPEAR--

--I LOOKED DOWN AND SAW MYSELF. THIRTEEN AGAIN.

NOT STUCK IN THE LOOP, BUT JUST A FEW SECONDS AFTER I'D POPPED OUT OF IT.

--WAS LYING THERE ALONE, STARING UP AT ME WITH TERRIFIED EYES.

--I--

MY PARENTS WERE SOMEWHERE TO THE SIDE, FRANTIC ON THE PHONE, AND SHE--

I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING TO HER. TO MAKE THINGS ALRIGHT.

AND EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS A NOOSE AROUND MY NECK...

...AND MY TONGUE WAS SWOLLEN AND MY LUNGS WERE EMPTY...

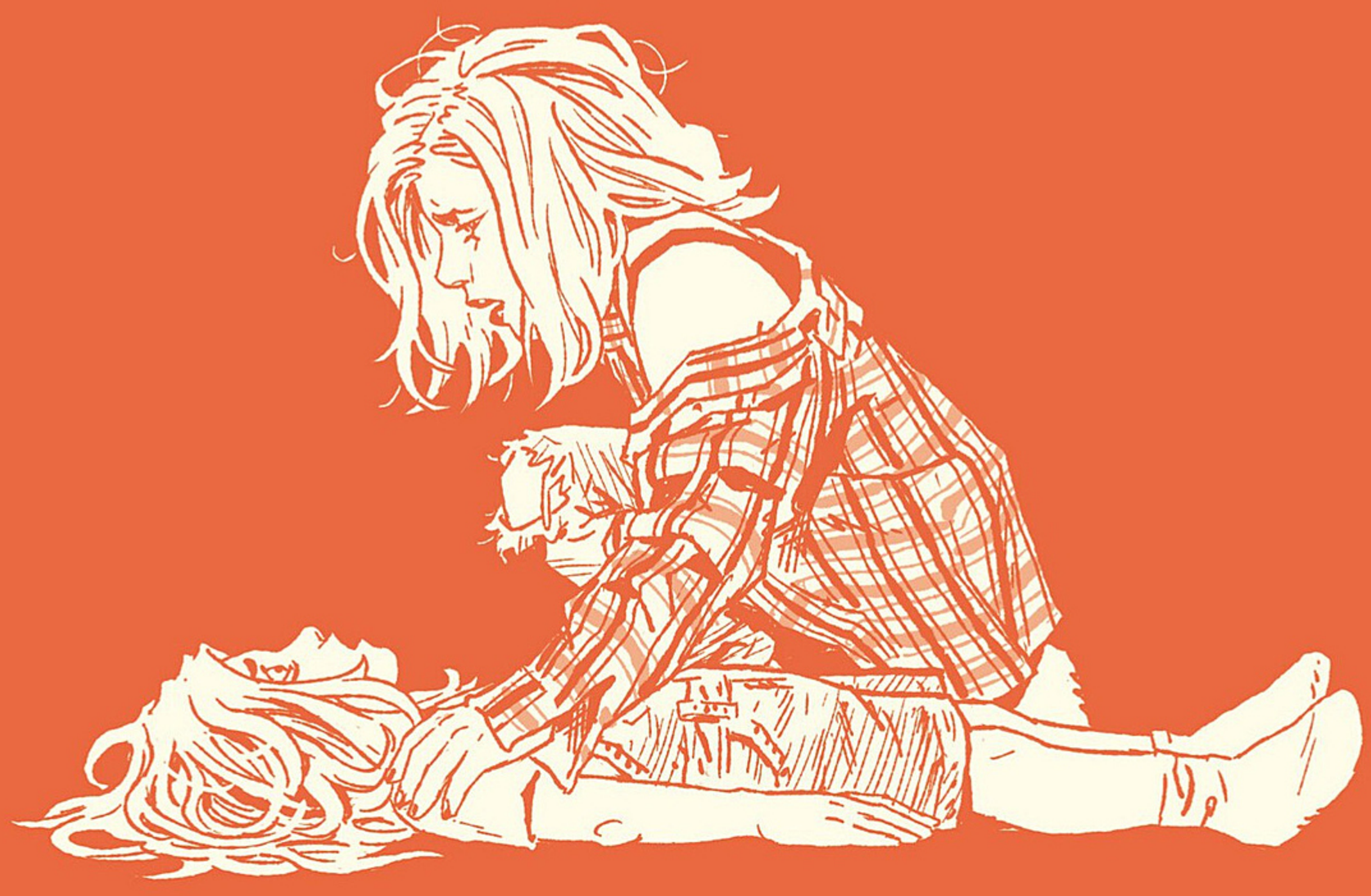
...SOMEHOW I COULD SPEAK.

SO I SAID TO HER WHAT I'D ALWAYS WISHED SOMEONE HAD SAID TO ME--

WE BELIEVE YOU.

WE *LOVE* YOU.

WE ARE GOING TO HELP YOU GET BETTER.



BUT SHE COULDN'T HEAR ME.

I COULDN'T HEAR MYSELF.

THE WORLD MOVED INCREMENTALLY ON...

THEN SOMETHING...

...UNRAVELED.

A KIND OF LETTING GO.

AND I WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR, STARING UP AT THE CEILING FAN. TRYING TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED.

I never did get the hang of tying knots.

THEN I CAME *HERE.*

TEMPORAL TRAUMA ANONYMOUS 1-2 PM

SEE, I THOUGHT... IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT EVEN IF I COULDN'T GO BACK AND TELL MYSELF WHAT I'D NEEDED TO HEAR...

...MAYBE I COULD DO IT FOR *OTHERS.* SO THEY WOULDN'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH WHAT I DID.

I'D BEEN ASKING MYSELF *"WHY?"* FOR SO LONG. *"WHY ME?"* MAYBE THIS COULD BE WHY.

SO I'M HERE.

...MY NAME'S ANNA. Did I say that already?

"I DON'T KNOW. EVERYTHING'S STILL REALLY HARD.

"I GET CONFUSED A LOT. I GET FRUSTRATED AND SCARED AND ANGRY A LOT.

"BUT SOMETHING I LEARNED-- IF YOU CAN MAKE IT THROUGH ANY ONE MINUTE-- JUST *60 SECONDS*--

I'M TRYING TO MOVE FORWARD.

"GOING WITH THE FLOW, EVEN IF IT TAKES ME IN CIRCLES SOMETIMES.

GOING FOR A RUN.

"SO THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING. TAKING THINGS ONE MINUTE, ONE STEP, AT A TIME.

"AND *ANOTHER.* AND, EVENTUALLY, THAT ADDS UP.

"--YOU CAN MAKE IT THROUGH *ANOTHER.*

...EVER BEEN CAUGHT IN A LOOP?

I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE. A LOT MORE THAN ARE WILLING TO ADMIT.

BUT THE EARTH KEEPS **SPINNING.** EVERY TIME AROUND IS A CHANCE FOR THINGS TO BE **BETTER.**

I'M **ASKING** YOU...

...RIGHT?

IT **HAS** TO BE.

NEXT:

ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS™

VOLUME 1

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SLEEP

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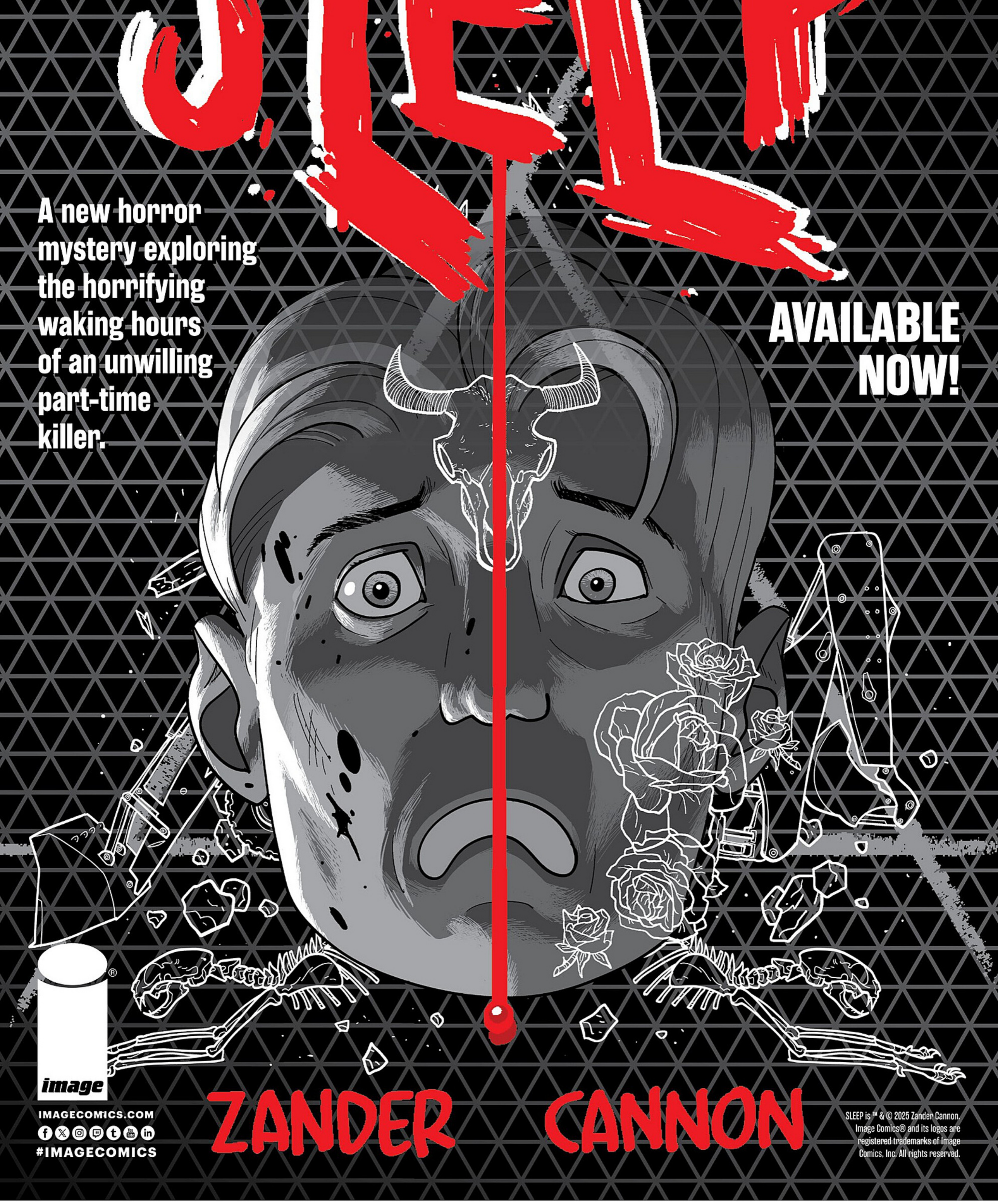

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ZANDER CANNON

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SEX.

VIOLENCE.

BEES.

WELCOME TO

THE HIVE

LIEBERMAN
HENDERSON
AZPIAZU

AVAILABLE
NOW

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RATED M – MATURE

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TIME IS HAVING A CRISIS!

Mingling in the red light district you can find actual cavemen, medieval knights, and cyborg soldiers on leave from World War IV. Victorian debutantes amble their way into cell phone stores, confused and bewildered (what is a data plan?); On their way to work, bleary-eyed commuters get trapped in time-loops, assaulted by alternate reality versions of themselves, try to avoid post-apocalyptic wastelands. And LOOK: the 3:15 bus just took a wrong turn…into the neolithic era.

Rising stars Deniz Camp (20TH CENTURY MEN, The Ultimates) and Eric Zawadzki (House of El) and Eisner-winners Jordie Bellaire and Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou are proud to present **ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS**, an ongoing, zig-zagging anthology series about the compromised clicks of our clocks—full of one-shot stories both beautiful and ugly, tragic and redemptive, surreal and somehow all-too-familiar. Stories of people (and reality) in CRISIS—trying to keep it together while the world is falling apart, second by twisted second…

COVER A

Goobadaddy

Empire